WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Shelling Near Line of Control by Pakistan

788. SHRI SITARAM KESRI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been continued shelling by the Pakistani army near the Line of Control during the last few months; and

(b) if so, the number of casualties suffered by India and what steps have been taken are proposed to be taken to ease the tension created by Government of Pakistan?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) During the period from 1st August 1999 to 30th November 1999, twenty Army peronnel and 12 civilians were killed and 137 Army personnel, 10 BSF personnel and 18 civilians were wounded due to unprovoked Pakistani firing across the Line of Control. Appropriate retaliatory fire is brought down upon the Pakistani troops.

Pakistan has long been urged, through diplomatic and military channels, to desist from this unprovoked firing.

Use of coir products for border roads

789. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Kerala has submitted any representation for using the Coir products for border roads;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Central Government have taken any action for using Coir for border roads; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A reference was received from Government of Kerala for exploring the possibility and to make use of Coir Geo-textiles for construction, development and strengthening of border roads.

(c) and (d) Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has considered the use of Coir Geo-textiles in road construction. After discussions with Coir board officials, it has been decided that BRO, jointly with Coir Baord, will take up a road stretch for laying the woven Coir Geo-textile to ascertain its efficacy and economy.

Joint sea patrolling in Mumbai

790. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether joint sea patrolling by the Navy, Customs and the State Police in Mumbai need funds to procure equipment to check smuggling;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the measures taken to provide funds and equipments to check ISI activities?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) The hardware, equipment and financial resources of the Navy and the Coast Guard are reviewed and upgraded from time to time. The Navy and Coast Guard carry out regular surveillance and patrol to protect the interest of the country. In this regard special operations in coordination with other Central and State Government agencies are also carried out.

Indian soldiers detained in Pak jails

† 791. SHRIMATI SAROJ DUBEY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that even now many Indian soldiers have been detained in Pak jails;

(b) if so, the number of soldiers detained therein; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.